

Cavendish bananas

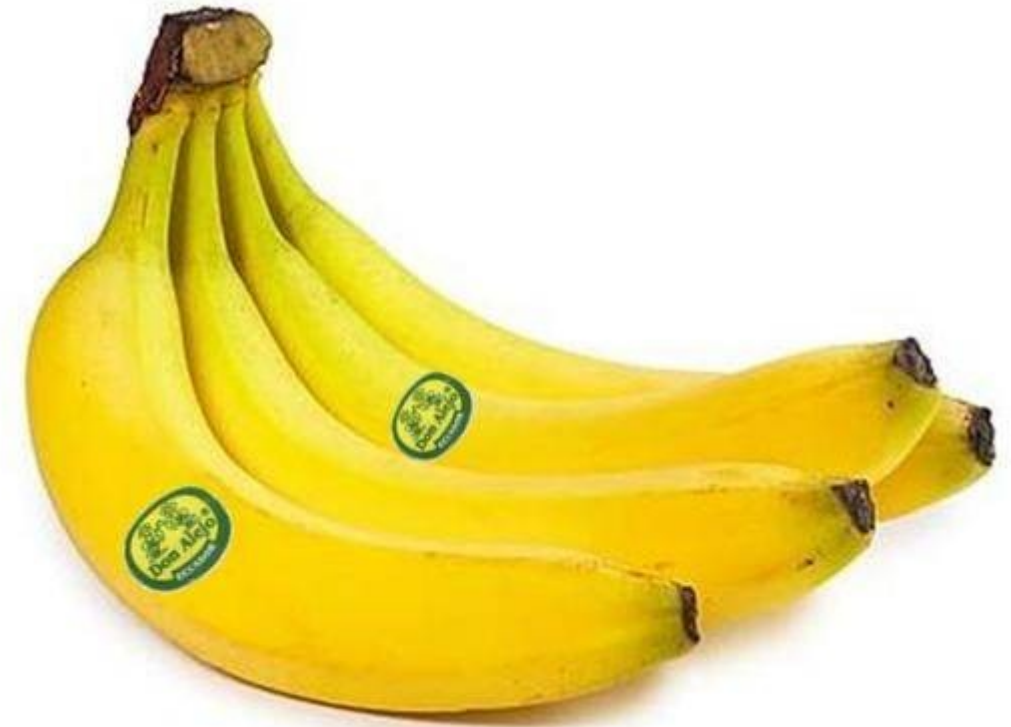
Most widely grown banana in the world

Available year-round because they are grown in tropical climates where the weather is very consistent

Grown mostly in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia

As with almost all bananas, the Cavendish are clones of each other because they don't produce seeds. This makes them all genetically identical and therefore, very susceptible to disease

These are the variety you see most in the grocery store



Plantains

Resemble Cavendish bananas, but are longer, have a thicker skin, and a starchier flavor

Are available year round and are popular in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asian countries

Are actually used more as a vegetable than as a fruit

Have 3 stages of ripening:

The Green stage tastes much like a potato and is used for side dishes

The Yellow stage is a little bit sweeter and is used as a fruit or a vegetable. Good for dishes that require a firm texture with a sweet taste

The Black stage is a very sweet and soft product that can be eaten out of hand or in a dessert



Finger Bananas

Also called Lady Fingers, Baby bananas, and Niño bananas

Are native to Colombia

Are just like Cavendish bananas, but are simply smaller

Grow to be only about 2 1/2— 4 inches long

Are sweeter than the Cavendish variety

Best for eating out of hand or in desserts



Red Bananas

Also known as Red Spanish, Red Cuban, or Colorado bananas

Get their name from the purplish-red color of the skin

Are most frequently grown in India

Unlike many other banana varieties, Red bananas are highly resistant to disease

Has a flavor that is very similar to the standard Cavendish variety



Ice Cream Bananas

Are native to the islands of Hawaii

Grow to be 7-9 inches long and up to 2 1/2 inches thick

When young, are a bluish-silvery color

When ripe, become a pale yellow color

The flesh of the ice cream banana is white and sweet

Used mostly for cooking and eating fresh out of hand



Apple bananas

Also known as Silk or Silk Fig bananas

Get their name due to their apple scent when ripe

Is the most popular dessert banana of tropics

Not grown on a large scale, but widely distributed throughout the tropics

Grow to be about 4-6 inches long



Orinoco bananas

Also called Horse, Hog, or Burro bananas

Grow to be about 6 inches long

The flesh of these bananas has a salmon tint to them

Orinoco bananas are firmer than other banana varieties when ripe

Can be eaten raw, but much like the plantain, they are best when baked or fried



Golden Beauty bananas

Were bred at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad in 1928

Created by crossing a "Gros Michel" banana with a wild variety known as the *Musa acuminata*

Because the Golden Beauty is crossbred, it is very resistant to disease

Are grown mostly in Honduras and Hawaii



Gros Michel bananas

Originally grown in Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, and Ceylon

Were introduced to Martinique in the early 19th century by a French Naval officer

The Gros Michel is now also grown in Jamaica, Fiji, Nicaragua, Hawaii, and Australia

This banana was once the leading cultivar in Central America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, but has been phased out due to disease

